DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 301 776 CG 021 255

AUTHOR Patnoe, Nancy Todd; Newlon, Betty J.
TITLE An Evaluation of Counseling Theories Used in Juvenile Treatment Programs.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Correctional Rehabilitation; Counseling Techniques; *Counseling Theories; Delinquency; *Delinquent Rehabilitation; Gestalt Therapy; *Peer Influence; *Program Effectiveness; *Recidivism; Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Adlerian Psychology; Eclectic Approach

ABSTRACT

The number of adjudicated delinquents is rising along with the need to develop effective deterrents and rehabilitative programs. Most rehabilitative efforts, when evaluated individually, do not show any significant degree of effectiveness or appreciable decrease in recidivism. Research in other fields suggests that delinquency is a group phenomenon. This study was conducted to examine existing treatment programs for juvenile offenders to determine if recidivism rates were related to differences in counseling theory and methods. The sample consisted of 728 juveniles assigned to three different non-residential programs in southern Arizona. Program A (N=305) was eclectic in its basic counseling theory; program B (N=365) placed emphasis on Gestalt theory; and program C (N=58) stressed Adlerian theory, placing added importance on peer-group techniques. Data were obtained from county juvenile court records and from program personnel. There were no significant differences found between males and females for any program, and no significant ethnic differences were found. For all programs, effectiveness increased for graduates of the program. Compared to programs A and B, program C with its Adlerian theory base was found to be significantly more effective in controlling recidivism while the juveniles were undergoing counseling and through 18 months after release. Graduates of program C spent relatively less time in counseling than did graduates of programs A or B. (Author/NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED301776

Counseling
Juvenile
Treatment

An Evaluation of Counseling Theories Used in Juvenile Treatment Programs

Nancy Todd Patnoe, M.A.

Betty J. Newlon, Ed.D.

Division of Counseling and Guidance

The University of Arizona

Tucson, AZ 85721

CG 021255

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Nancy Todd Patnoe
Betty J. Newlon

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The number of adjudicated delinquents is rising along with the need to develop effective deterrents and rehabilitative programs. Most rehabilitative efforts, when evaluated individually, do not show any significant degree of effectiveness or appreciable decrease in recidivism. Research in other fields suggests that delinquency is a group phenomenon; this study indicates that Adlerian counseling which includes group interaction may provide measurable, cost-effective rehabilitation. The major focus of this study was the examination of existing treatment programs for juvenile offenders to determine if recidivism rates were related to differences in counseling theory and methods. The sample consisted of 728 juveniles. Three non-residential programs were studied--each with a different theoretical counseling base. Those individuals who completed any of the programs were found to recidivate less. Those who completed the Adlerian-based program using peer-group techniques demonstrated the lowest rate of recidivism.

Adolescence is a time of identity searching and developing values (Corey and Corey, 1977). These years can be extremely difficult if the adolescent feels alone in this period of personal conflict and doubt. Adolescents need to experiment with reality and test limits, however, in testing their limits poor behavioral choices may be made.

Adolescents labeled "juvenile delinquents" are those youth whose behavior has been aggressive toward society and who have come before the juvenile court system. There are a wide range of behaviors that are considered juvenile offenses, i.e., incorrigibility, smoking, parental defiance, loitering, illegal use of controlled substances, trespassing, burglary, robbery, rape, homicide, and violation of court ordered restrictions.

Workable alternatives for the treatment of delinquents are increasing (Empey, 1982) and the need to identify effective deterrents or rehabilitative programs is necessary. Most rehabilitative efforts, when evaluated, do not show any significant degree of effectiveness or any appreciable effect on recidivism (Malquist, 1972; Gottfredson, 1972; Gold, 1974; Martinson, 1974; Denno, 1979; Rojeck and Erickson, 1981-82).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if there were juvenile treatment programs that could be theoretically defined that were most effective in decreasing recidivism rates. This study attempted to determine if differences existed and, if so, relate those differences to differing styles and methods of counseling.

The study also measured treatment program effectiveness with regard to the age, gender and ethnicity of the juveniles, the persistence and seriousness of offenses, as well as the implications of program completion.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 728 juveniles assigned to three different non-residential (street) programs in Southern Arizona (Program A N=305, Program B N=365, Program C N=58). Program A was described as eclectic in its basic counseling theory; Program B placed emphasis on Gestalt theory, and Program C stressed Adlerian theory, placing added importance on peer-group techniques. Because the programs did not require institutionalization, clients were able to continue offending during treatment, thus permitting an investigation of program effectiveness before, during and after treatment.

All data were obtained from county juvenile court records and from program personnel. The court records

supplied a list of all cases assigned to the programs, individual characteristics of the juveniles and offense descriptions for the periods before, during and after the counseling process. The juvenile court records also provided entry and departure dates for all cases assigned to the programs.

The programs supplied data in two forms. First, an interview was conducted with each program director in order to identify counseling theories and methods. Second, each program supplied a list of those juveniles assigned to them by the juvenile court, along with entry and departure dates. This provided a cross-check to determine the accuracy of records. The programs also provided data about the reasons for termination. All data of individual characteristics and records of juveniles assigned to programs were obtained from the juvenile court record. Only those juveniles who had been officially adjudicated as being delinquent and who were assigned to the programs being evaluated were included in the study. Cases which were defined as being the result of dependency or protective placements were not included. All juveniles were residents of the jurisdiction ordering the placements.

Additionally, each juvenile assigned was under the supervision of a probation officer. The extent of probation officer involvement was unknown, but it was

assumed to have little systematic effect since no single probation officer was assigned to one program.

Several other assumptions were made: that the program directors presented an accurate description of their treatment program and its counseling philosophy, and that the juveniles assigned to the programs did actually attend scheduled sessions and receive treatment. These assumptions do not seriously threaten the validity of the study, but rather suggest certain cautions which must be recalled when conclusions are evaluated.

Client Characteristics

The average age of clients assigned to the programs was 15 years; thus it was assumed that program variations were not due to age differences. Similarly, it was assumed that "maturational reform" (Empey,1983, p. 114 and p. 287) would occur uniformly.

Insert Table 1 about here

Although the exact nature of offenses prior to assignment was unknown, the average number of prior offenses and seriousness were used to indicate the extent to which each program was involved with actual delinquency. The number of prior offenses was simply considered the number of times a juvenile had been referred to juvenile court before reaching the program; the seriousness score

was an average scalar rating, with offenses against persons assigned a score of 6, offenses against property a score of 5, drug offenses a score of 4, peace violations a 2, and status offenses a score of 1. Using this scalar rating, the most serious offender's score would approach 6; the least serious offender's score would approach 1. The scores were aggregated for each program and an average score was established.

Scores indicated that the programs served a population heavily involved in delinquency, since the average score for all cases referred to court was 3.0 (Patnoe & Erickson, 1984). Program A and Program B received juveniles with scores slightly more than 5; and Program C, 4.6.

All three programs served both male and female offenders, and while females showed more rehabilitation, the differences were not statistically significant.

Description of Programs

Program A, described as eclectic, stressed specialized treatment where case workers were assigned according to a needs assessment. The program attempted to provide individual, family and group counseling as well as educational, recreational, and employment services. Contact between the juvenile and the counselor occurred on a daily basis (5x week) during informal discussions. Personnel were generally trained in the social sciences--

not necessarily in counseling--and "street smarts" were emphasized. In both style and selection of personnel, this program approached a model of community-oriented social work.

Program B placed emphasis on Gestalt theory. Terms such as "target behaviors" and "participation on the cognitive level" were used to describe program goals. Individual and family counseling were employed. All counselors had obtained Masters degrees and were encouraged to improve their skills with ongoing workshops or formal education. Counselors met with assigned juveniles 16 to 20 times in the first month, with contact decreasing as progress warranted.

Program C stressed Adlerian theory, placing strong emphasis on peer-group techniques, the family constellation, self-concept and self-awareness. Decision-making skills were emphasized as a means of determing life orientation. The staff was selected for their educational credentials, their "willingness to grow" and to participate in the community sessions. Contact with clients was scheduled on a daily basis (5x week).

Statistical Strategy

The programs were evaluated using a time-series design. While this strategy is used infrequently in the social sciences, it possesses several advantages. First, it can demonstrate the effects of intervention over time.

Second, it permits the examination of all individuals involved in what might be called "standard" time; thus, all individuals may be considered equally regardless of their date of release (Fisher and Erickson, 1973). Additionally, a "no treatment" model is not required for comparison in this method. Rather, it is sufficient that the treatments are somehow different from each other and that the differences--in this case the counseling philosophies--can be described qualitatively. Additionally, the time-series design "provides a useful control over those aspects of history, maturation. . ."shared by all programs (Fisher and Erickson, 1973, p. 183).

For the purpose of this study five time periods were constructed to study recidivism 3 months, 6 months, 12 months, eighteen months and 24 months after release. For each time period, the proportion of juveniles who had recidivated was measured and expressed as a proportion of the total number of juveniles released from each program. These measures were accumulated for each program so that the cumulative proportion of juveniles released was reflected in the measure of recidivism. This cumulative proportion of recidivism was used as the dependent variable. A linear regression analysis produced a formula predicting the expected recidivism rate for each program at any time after release.

These evaluations were compared to determine what, if any, statistical differences could be measured between programs by using the slopes of each predictive equation. The significant level $p<.05$ was used as the criterion of statistical significance.

While this method was well suited to the data and analytical questions, it possessed one limitation in that it relied on the assumption of random distribution. This was problematic in measuring Program C; therefore, a supplemental method (the test of statistical differences between proportions) was employed to evaluate these data. This method of analysis is not dependent upon assumptions of random distribution (Loether and McTavish, 1980, p. 556). While it does not address differences over time, it does allow the assessment of differences at specific points in time. This analysis was employed only to establish statistical differences between subsets of individuals rather than differences between programs.

For each program, descriptive statistics were developed. These data were examined to insure that the programs did not differ greatly. The characteristics of each client examined were: age, gender, ethnicity, number of offenses prior to program assignment, seriousness of offenses, and completion of the program.

Additional data were gathered for each program on the proportion of juveniles who were referred to court while

still assigned to the programs. The only measure of individual commitment available was completion or non-completion of the program.

Demographics

Since the courts attempted to assign clients to programs which were geographically accessible, neighborhood demographics were mirrored in the program populations. Programs B and C served a group of juveniles who were basically Anglo with a minority representation of approximately 20%. Program A's population was essentially minority. While Anglos were found to be marginally more successful than minorities in all three programs, these differences were not statistically significant.

Additionally, the clients in all programs were divided into two more groups: those who completed the program (graduates) and those who did not (non-graduates). This division was essential in the context of the evaluation design. Using a medical analogy, any "medication" could only be evaluated after a "full dose" was received. Similarly, with counseling styles, any comparison must distinguish between those who completed the program and those who withdrew without full exposure. This distinction also highlighted a possible explanation for the general ineffectiveness of many existing programs--simply that most juveniles do not complete their court assignments. Since no measurable differences existed between graduates and

non-graduates as they entered the programs, this indicates that completion was not predictable; rather, it was the result of events which occurred during treatment or of conditions which were not assessed in this study.

Insert Table 2 about here

Findings

In-Program Failures

The three treatment programs were also evaluated for their effectiveness in curbing delinquency during the counseling process. Program C appeared to be the most effective, with a 25% recidivist proportion for graduates and a 43% recidivist proportion for non-graduates.

A second evaluation method measured the number of offenses committed by the juveniles during treatment. Program C was superior, with an average of .64 offenses per case. Once again the graduate/non-graduate distinction is pertinent. While Program C graduates continued to have the lowest number of offenses (.69), Program A graduates were shown to have a relatively low number (.87) when compared to Program B (1.05). While this finding does not challenge the superiority of Program C, it does demonstrate that Program B cannot be judged more effective without the graduate/non-graduate distinction.

A third method of evaluation provided a measure of the average number of referrals per offender in each program. Those offenders who failed to complete Program C had a lower average number of referrals while in the program than those who did complete the program. This finding is not easily explained, yet an investigation showed that Program C had the highest proportion of juveniles who were terminated from that program and committed to the Department of Corrections, i.e., a secured facility, or to other programs involving institutionalization. This would suggest that recidivism rates were lower for those who failed to complete the program because the offenses committed resulted in institutionalization.

Recidivism After Treatment

During the first measured time period all three programs had essentially identical measurements for recidivism: .27 of the clients in Program A were referred to court, .30 for Program B and .29 for Program C. All three programs at this point seemed to show a short-term release effect. For all programs, a large proportion of those who would recidivate did so in the first three months--43.5% (A), 53.6% (B), and 78.4% (C).

After a second three-month period only slight differences were evident, with Program C appearing to be marginally more effective. After the 12-month measurement, however, Program C was clearly differentiated. Only .34 of

the juveniles had recidivated as compared to .53 and .48 for Programs A and B respectively.

During the next measured year Program C maintained and extended this difference, with only .37 clients having recidivated as opposed to .62 for Program A and .56 for Program B. Thus Program C showed a significantly lower rate.

An investigation of these proportions for non-graduates presented little new information and emphasizes the necessity of completing the counseling process. For all purposes, graduates and non-graduates were reappearing in court at the same rate. All benefits from these programs appear to be short-term.

These findings, when statistically evaluated, were found to be valid. Table 4 presents the summarized data for the linear regression evaluation of the three programs. In order to compare all three programs it was necessary to determine statistical differences between three pairs of equations: Program A to B, Program B to C, and Program A to C. The results of these comparisons are shown in Table 4. The only program which was found to be statistically different was Program C. Programs A and B were not statistically different in their recidivism patterns. This finding is the essence of the present investigation. One program was superior in its ability to reduce recidivism when compared to other similar organizations.

Insert Table 4 about here

The distinctions between graduates and non-graduates do not represent any unique findings; rather, they establish more firmly the previous conclusion that completion is essential to treatment (Table 5). Using a test of differences between proportions, the programs were compared to determine if there were any differences to be discovered using the completion distinction. The only differences which were statistically significant were those between Program C and the other two programs. There were statistically no significant differences between either the graduates or non-graduates of Programs A and B. Even when considering only graduates, Program C must be considered more effective.

Insert Table 5 about here

These results are strengthened when examining the number of offenses as well as the number of offenders (Table 6). The average juvenile, after release from Program C, had less than one offense (.66), whereas Programs A and B both had an average of over two offenses per case (2.9 and 2.12). This is a considerable difference, suggesting that Program C not only deters juveniles from offending, but also appears to have a

prophylactic effect on the number of offenses committed after release.

Insert Table 6 about here

When comparing the average number of offenses for graduates and non-graduates, similar results were found. For each program the graduates had fewer offenses than non-graduates. Program A graduates had nearly seven times the number of offenses as Program C graduates; Program B graduates had five times as many offenses.

Additional data show the considerable long-term effectiveness of Program C. Its clients committed fewer offenses.

Conclusions

When evaluating the relative rates of recidivism for three programs, each with a different theoretical base, one program was found to be significantly more effective in reducing delinquent involvement subsequent to release from treatment. This finding is significant in light of the vast body of literature which finds most interventions unsuccessful.

Other findings warrant discussion. First, there were no significant differences found between males and females for any program. This indicates that counseling methods

and philosophies need not be selected specifically for gender. Given the limitations presented by the sample chosen--i.e., highly involved delinquents assigned to street programs--it appears that programs need not include only one sex.

Second, no significant ethnic related differences occurred. This result was not unexpected, since it was assumed that each program had incorporated appropriate minority-related emphasis to serve its clientele.

Program C, which used Adlerian and peer-group techniques, was found to be more effective in controlling recidivism while the juveniles were undergoing counseling and through 18 months after release. For all programs, however, effectiveness increased for graduates. This highlights the need in current rehabilitative programs to emphasize completion.

An additional finding strengthens the effectiveness of Program C, since its graduates spent relatively less time in counseling--an average of 6.5 months, compared to 7.5 and 10.8 for Programs A and B. While cost data were not used in this study, these figures suggest cost efficiency.

Counselors must make every attempt to keep juveniles in the counseling process. It is doubtful that programs dealing with other types of counseling experience such a dismal lack of completion. While the counselor is not the only possible source of non-completion, an improvement in

efforts to keep juveniles in programs would benefit not only the juvenile, but also the program.

Table 1. Characteristics of Cases before Assignment to Programs

Variables	Cases Included	Program A	Program B	Program C
Number of Cases	All Cases	305	365	58
	Graduates	110	154	16
	Non-graduates	195	212	42
	% Graduating	36	42	28
Average Age	All Cases	15.1	15.0	15.1
	Graduates	15.2	15.0	15.3
	Non-graduates	14.7	15.0	15.1
Average Number of Prior Offenses	All Cases	6.3	5.4	4.6
	Graduates	6.0	5.3	4.4
	Non-Graduates	6.5	5.4	4.7
Average Seriousness	All Cases	3.9	3.9	4.0
	Graduates	4.0	3.9	4.3
	Non-graduates	3.9	3.9	3.9
Percent Male	All Cases	87	84	78
	Graduate	88	82	88
	Non-graduates	85	85	74
Percent Anglo	All Cases	9	80	83
	Graduates	7	82	88
	Non-graduates	11	85	86
Percent Hispanic	All Cases	68	15	12
	Graduates	64	14	19
	Non-graduates	74	15	10
Percent Black	All Cases	20	5	3
	Graduates	16	5	0
	Non-graduates	22	5	5

Table 2. Proportion Committing Offenses during Counseling Process

Variables	Cases Included	Program A	Program B	Program C
Proportion of In-Program Failures	All Cases	.62	.58	.37
	Graduate	.45	.54	.25
	Non-Graduate	.72	.60	.43
Average Number of Referrals Per Case	All Cases	1.33	1.25	.64
	Graduate	.87	1.05	.69
	Non-Graduate	1.58	1.37	.62
Average Number of Referrals per Offender	All Cases	2.13	2.18	1.68
	Graduate	1.92	1.95	1.83
	Non-Graduate	2.21	2.32	1.63

Table 3. Accumulated Recidivism Rates of Programs by Time Periods: Proportion Committing Offenses after Termination from Counseling

Time Period After Release	Cases Included	Program		
		A	B	C
Up to 3 Months	All Cases	.27	.30	.29
	Graduates	.18	.22	.13
	Non-Graduate	.33	.36	.29
Up to 6 Months	All Cases	.40	.38	.34
	Graduates	.33	.29	.25
	Non-Graduate	.44	.45	.38
Up to 12 Months	All Cases	.53	.48	.34
	Graduates	.48	.41	.25
	Non-Graduate	.55	.54	.38
Up to 18 Months	All Cases	.57	.52	.37
	Graduates	.51	.46	.25
	Non-Graduate	.60	.56	.43
Up to 24 Months	All Cases	.62	.56	.37
	Graduates	.59	.56	.25
	Non-Graduate	.63	.60	.43

Table 4. Summary Results of the Time-series Regression Analysis

Program	Constant	b	R^2	S.E.	p	Comparison	Z	Significance
A	.28	.016	.87	.0034	<.01	A to B	1.02	p>.05
B	.30	.012	.89	.0019	<.01	B to C	3.21	p<.05
C	.30	.003	.77	.0011	<.01	A to C	3.61	p<.05

Table 5. Test of Significant Differences Between Graduates and Non-graduates

Program	Variable	Proportion Recidivating	Comparison	Z	Significance
A	Graduates	.59	A to B	.49	p>.05
B	Graduates	.56	A to C	2.54	p<.05
C	Graduates	.25	B to C	2.37	p<.05
A	Non-Grads	.63	A to B	.20	p>.05
B	Non-Grads	.60	A to C	2.38	p<.05
C	Non-Grads	.43	B to C	2.02	p<.05

Table 6. Referral of Cases After Release from Program

Variables	Cases Included	Program A	Program B	Program C
After Program Failures	All Cases	.62	.56	.37
	Graduates	.59	.56	.25
	Non-Graduates	.63	.60	.43
Average Number of Referrals Per Case	All Cases	2.39	2.12	.66
	Graduate	2.04	1.50	.31
	Non-Graduate	2.59	2.56	.79
Average Number of Referrals per Offender	All Cases	3.90	3.76	1.72
	Graduate	3.45	3.01	1.25
	Non-Graduate	4.15	4.21	2.06

References

Corey, G. & Corey, M. S. (1977). Counseling groups for adolescents. Groups, Process and Practice. Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole, 166-168.

Denno, D. (1979). Moral development and treatment potential of youths under age eighteen. Adolescence. (Vol. XIV, No. 54).

Empey, L. T. (1982). American delinquency: Its meaning and construction. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.

Fisher, G. A. & Erickson, M. L. (1973). On assessing the effects of official reactions to juvenile delinquency. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency. Vol. 10 and Vol. 2, No. 2, 177-194.

Gold, M. (1974). A time for skepticism. Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 20, No. 1, 20-24.

Gottfredson, D. M. (1972). Five challenges. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 9, No. 2, 68-86.

Loether, H. J. & McTavish, D. (1980). Descriptive and inferential statistics. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 471-559.

Malquist, C. P. (1972). Juvenile detention: Right and adequacy of treatment issues. Law and Society Review, Vol. 7, No. 2, 159-193.

Martinson, R. (1982). What works? In Rojeck, D. A. & Jensen, G. F. Readings in Delinquency. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 294-303.

Patnoe, J. & Erickson, M. L. (1984). Referrals to Pima County juvenile court and the demographic and biological distribution of referrals in Pima County, 1982. Tucson, AZ: Pima County Juvenile Court.

Rojeck, D. G. & Erickson, M. L. (1981-82). Reforming the juvenile justice system: The diverson of status offenders. Law and Society Review, Vol. 16, No. 2, 241-254.